

The Hereditary Factor in Delinquency, Prostitution, Pauperism and Vagrancy :
 Delinquency.
 Prostitution.
 Pauperism and Vagrancy.
 The Inheritance of Mental Ability.
 The Alleged Relation of Genius to Insanity and other abnormalities.
 Race.
 The Birth Rate.
 Neo-Malthusianism—Birth Control.
 Natural Selection in Man.
 Selective Effect of Infant Mortality.
 Selective Influence of War.
 Sexual Selection in Man.
 Urban Selection and the Influence of Industrial Development on Racial Heredity.
 The Racial Influence of Religion.
 Immigration and Emigration as Related to Racial Changes.
 Consanguinity.
 Race Mixture and the Inter-marriage of Different Stocks.
 Determination of Sex.
 The Sex Ration.
 The Influence of Age of Parents on Offspring.
 The Influence of Order of Birth on Offspring.
 Negative Eugenics, Sterilization, Segregation, etc.

E.W.M.

[This work must be regarded as a very valuable Library asset and not merely as an object for review, and the Hon. Librarian, and all those who use our shelves are exceedingly grateful to the writer for the generous gift. The chapters take the form of sections of the sub-divisions of this subject, and in most cases a short and matter-of-fact paragraph introduces the subject in a historical manner, giving a concise survey of the range of literature available. We would particularly call readers' attention to the page, it is not more, dealing with the racial influences of venereal disease. Professor Holmes brings his usual critical acumen to bear on this subject, and much confused thinking may be avoided by following the lines he lays down].

Lascaux, Dr. Robert. *La Production et la Population.* Payot, Paris, 1921. Pp. 335. 15s.

To those who have made a study of population problems the example of France has been a most fascinating and puzzling feature. France is the pioneer land of birth-control in the modern sense, having progressively adopted contraceptive methods since the Revolution, until her birth-rate has become the lowest in the world. Family limitation is practically universal there except in the very lowest stratum, and yet it is the land of violent reaction against all neo-Malthusian propaganda, and of the wildest schemes for promoting large families. When to these manifestations of political and clerical opinion are added the

fact that France has the lowest rate of increase in population; that its general and infantile mortality does not compare very favourably with that of other countries of higher birth rate; and that there is actual slow depopulation of certain provinces (though not as has so often been stated of France as a whole); it is little wonder that the opponents of Birth Control seize with joy upon these apparent proofs of its evil tendencies; and that the public, misled by their exaggeration and distortions are puzzled and disturbed.

It is therefore with especial pleasure that we have read the important book by Dr. Robert Lascaux '*La Production et la Population*', which comes as a welcome corrective to the outpouring of repopulationist writers like M. Bertillon and M. Aséne Dumont. For the first time after many years of zealous and no doubt well-intentioned partisanship, we have got what was urgently needed—a temperate and scientific consideration of the population question, especially as it concerns France; and as a recent visit to Paris showed that it was prominently displayed in the bookshops in spite of the ban on neo-Malthusian literature, it is to be hoped that it will have a useful effect on French opinion and politics.

Dr. Lascaux is at one with the *repopulateurs* in deploring the slow rate of increase of the French population, and no one need differ from them. But instead of joining in their thoughtless cry for more children, he asks the question which some of us have been asking for years:—‘How is France to provide for an increase of population.’ Nothing is easier than to call children into the world, few things are more difficult than to keep them there. Does France succeed in keeping those she already has? She does not. Her infantile and child mortality are far higher than they should be and the longevity of her people is lower than it ought to be. If improvement were effected in these respects the increase of population in France would be considerably accelerated with its present birth-rate; and the clear answer to the *repopulateurs*, is ‘Save the children you have before you ask for more.’

A writer in the *Times* of June 30th has pertinently pointed out that although the present populations of England and Wales and of France are nearly the same, there were actually more babies in France than in England and Wales in 1923,* and yet our excess of births over deaths in that year was more than three times that of France. This clearly indicates that the population difficulty in France is due to its high death-rate instead of its low birth-rate and that France could maintain a fairly rapid increase of population with its present birth-rate if it could reduce its mortality.

The present writer well remembers the look of incredulous astonishment on the faces of the members of our own Birth Rate Commission at his remark that the increase of population of a country has nothing to do with its birth-rate. Of course if there were no births the population would soon diminish, but as a matter of fact there is not a country in the old world in which the birth-rate is not in excess of its expansion of production of the necessities of life; and it is the produc-

* 1923 was a year of abnormally high birth-rate in France, following on the large number of marriages and return of husbands after the War.

tion of these necessities, not the birth-rate, which determines the rate of increase of population. This is the key-note of Dr. Lascaux's book, and no one is competent to write on the question of population who does not realize this important fact. Even in France with the lowest birth-rate in the world, each further fall in the birth-rate has been accompanied by a fall in the death-rate (a fall of the birth-rate from 39 per thousand in 1781-84 to 20.7 in 1901-10 or of 18.8 per thousands was accompanied by a fall in the death rate from 37.1 to 19.3 or of 17.8 per thousand, and the correlation between the birth- and death-rates for the ten years preceding the war was $+ 0.5$) suggesting that the slow rate of increase is governed by something independent of the birth-rate. Dr. Lascaux gives several illustrations of this fact from the records of other countries, and he points out that no stock farmer would have the folly to breed more animals than his fields will nourish, and that if slaughtering were stopped flocks would actually diminish through starvation. To the commonsense student of population it is perfectly obvious that for any given rate increase of the food supply there is an optimum birth-rate which will secure the maximum survival rate, and that any higher birth-rate will actually cause a slower increase of population owing to the useless consumption of those who die in infancy or early youth. The slow rate of natural increase—only 1.7 per thousand—in France in 1781-84, when the birth-rate was 39 per thousand, is a striking illustration of this fact. When the birth-rate fell to about 30.7 in 1821-30 the natural increase actually rose to about 6 per thousand.

And this argument is considerably strengthened when we consider the quality as well as quantity of population. Not only do the surplus birth diminish the survival rate by the food they uselessly consume, but they detract from the productive efficiency of the survivors whose strength, vitality, and receptivity are injured by continued under-nutrition; and as the increase of population depends on this efficiency the effect of an excessive birth-rate is cumulative. With the growth of birth-control knowledge and of charitable and state relief this process has been further intensified by the cacogenic effect of restriction of births by the provident to meet the cost of support of the offspring of the improvident, thus tending to reduce the proportion of competent producers; and it is this deplorable feature which the French Nation proposes to foster by its rewards for large families and its measures for salaries proportioned to the size of families. It would be difficult to devise measures better calculated to defeat its own object of increasing the population.

The peculiar difficulty in the case of France which explains its low rate of increase in spite of its amply adequate birth-rate is, as the present writer has pointed out, its deficiency in mineral wealth, which has militated against its competition with more favoured countries such as Great Britain, Germany, and America. Possibly the regaining of Alsace-Lorraine will give it better opportunities in the future.

Dr. Lascaux brings out these points very clearly in his book, and has put the theory of economic productivity into a concise mathematical form, which enables him to deduce the consequences of various policies with remarkable clearness. His conclusion, which all un-

biased students of the subject must accept, is that an acceleration of the increase of the French population can only be secured by increasing the productive efficiency of the people, which involves (a) the increase of capital by individual enterprise and thrift, (b) the increase of skill by education and efficient use of effort, (c) the adoption of labour saving machinery for which increased capital is necessary, and the increase of hours of labour or of shift-work for making full use of it, (d) the stimulus of individual gain and luxury, and (e) the removal of measures which foster the increase of the improvident and less capable at the expense of the provident and capable. Although these conclusions will be most unwelcome to sentimentalists of every hue, there can be no doubt of their correctness, and Dr. Lascaux's remarkable work should be thoroughly studied by all who wish to understand not only the problem of population but all other social questions.

C. V. DRYSDALE.

Shipley, Sir A. E. *Life: An Introduction to the Study of Biology.* Cambridge University Press. 1923. Price 6s.

STUDENTS of biology need no introduction to Sir Arthur Shipley, who by his previous publications has shown his ability to present, in an interesting form, the salient features of this fascinating branch of science.

In the space of a couple of hundred pages he has succeeded in discussing a wide range of functions characteristic of living organisms, including within his survey: protoplasm, cells, feeding, the nitrogen cycle, soil problems, digestion, respiration, movement, reproduction and rhythm. Though the book is admirably adapted to the needs of students entering upon the study of biology, its scope is greater than this; for by its lucidity and delightful style it must prove of interest to all thinking men and women. This was the author's hope, for at the end of his preface he writes "Finally I venture to hope that this book will not be without interest to the public that is not preparing for examinations, and thank heaven that public is still in the great majority!"

The illustrations are clear and well chosen; and the numerous snatches of verse scattered through the text, while adding humour to the book, give an insight into the author's humanistic outlook on life. After a discussion of the movement of the centipede's legs the following is particularly haunting.

■ "A centipede was happy quite,
Until a toad in fun,
Said 'Pray which leg moves after which?'
This raised her doubts to such a pitch,
She fell exhausted in a ditch,
Not knowing how to run."

D. W. CUTLER.

Swinburne, J., F.R.S. *Population and the Social Problem.* George Allen and Unwin, Ltd. London, 9124. Pp. 380. Price 15s. net.

THAT public interest in the population problem is growing is shown by the increasing number of books now being published on that subject.